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Independent First Grade Writers, WHAT? It can happen. Beginning Writing Workshop [1st grade]

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EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF TRINITY UNIVERSITY

Understanding by Design Curriculum Units

**Independent First Grade Writers, WHAT? It can happen.
Beginning Writing Workshop**

Megan Nitcholas
Audrey Tan
2010

UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: Independent First Grade Writers, WHAT? It can happen. Beginning Writing Workshop

Grade Level: First Grade

Subject/Topic Area(s): Writing

Designed By: Megan Nitcholas and Audrey Tan

Time Frame: 10 Days

School District: Leander Independent School District

School: Winkley Elementary

School Address and Phone: 2100 Pow Wow Leander, TX 78641 (512) 570-6700

Brief Summary of Unit (Including curricular context and unit goals):

This unit is designed as a beginning of the year unit in 1st grade writing. Students will have had very limited exposure to writing.

Students will be introduced to the writing workshop format and develop their confidence as beginning writers. Students will discover the power of writing as a tool for communication. Throughout the unit students will practice becoming independent writers. They will learn how to generate personally relevant topics. Through mini-lessons, students will learn that writing is an ongoing process and that their writing is continually evolving.

The unit will conclude with students demonstrating their learning through creating a beginning writing piece that will be made into a class book. Students will celebrate their progress as a writer and collectively create a writing workshop contract that will be referred back to throughout the rest of the school year.

Unit: Independent First Grade Writers, WHAT? It can happen. Beginning Writing Workshop
Grade: First Grade

Stage 1: Desired Results

Established Goals (Standards)

TEKS or Scope & Sequence

1.17 Writing/Writing Process. Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text. Students are expected to:

(A) plan a first draft by generating ideas for writing (e.g., drawing, sharing ideas, listing key ideas)

1.18 Writing/Literary Texts. Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas.

1.19 Writing/Expository and Procedural Texts. Students write expository and procedural or work-related texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes. Students are expected to:

(A) write brief compositions about topics of interest to the student

1.29 Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to follow agreed-upon rules for discussion, including listening to others, speaking when recognized, and making appropriate contributions

Understandings

Students will understand that...

- Everybody is a writer.
- Writers write about what they know and love.
- Writing is a tool for communication.
- Writing is an ongoing process.

Essential Questions

1. Why do writers write?
2. Where do writers get their ideas?
3. What do good writers do?

Knowledge

Students will know...

- That letters make sounds
- That letters can be put together to make words
- That writing is a way to communicate meaning
- That reading and writing are deeply connected

Skills

Students will be able to...

- Label a picture and write about it
- Generate ideas to write about
- Reread their own work
- Focus on a writing task independently

Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

Performance Task:

Student will use knowledge and skills learned during mini-lessons to create a beginning writing piece that will be made into a class book. Students will be individually assessed by the teacher using a rubric.

Other evidence:

Student Survey, journal writing, conferences, observation, mid unit assessment

Stage 3: Learning Activities

(Steps taken to get students to answer Stage 1 questions and complete performance task)

Day 1: Introduction

- Student Survey
 - Gauge students' attitude towards writing
- Hook
 - Ask each student to bring their favorite book in the classroom to the carpet.
 - Think-Pair-Share
 - Why is this book your favorite?
 - Where do you think the words came from?
 - What is an author?
 - Why did the author write this book?
 - Whole Class Discussion: Explain that all authors had to start somewhere and this year during this time we will be working on becoming writers.
- Introduction to Writing Workshop format
 - Mini-lesson (about 10 minutes)
 - Explain to the students that every day the class will meet at the carpet and the teacher will teach a short lesson about something the writers can use in their own writing.
 - Writing (about 20 – 25 minutes)
 - Explain to the students that this is the time where they will go back to their desk and independently work on a piece of writing in their writing folder.
 - Sharing (about 5 – 10 minutes)
 - Explain to the student that this is the time when the class will come back together on the carpet and the teacher will choose several students to share what they have been working on with the rest of the class. Emphasize that this time is a time for celebration and not a time for critiquing others work.
- Mini-Lesson (Lucy Calkins p. 2)
 - *Where do writers get their ideas?*
 - *Writers write about what they know and love.*
 - Teacher models drawing, labeling and writing
 - Students brainstorm topics and share with a neighbor
 - Students return to their desk for independent writing time
- Writing Time
 - Students will work independently on drawing a picture of something that is relevant to them
 - Teacher will walk around room giving positive feedback about students getting ideas on paper
- Sharing
 - Call all students to the carpet with their writing in their writing folder
 - Wagon Wheel-Kagan Structure
 - Divide the students in half
 - One group stands in a circle facing out
 - The other group makes a circle on the outside facing the other circle
 - Explain that each student will hold their writing at their chest and share with the person in front of them.
 - After one student has shared their partner will share
 - The students will then thank their partner for sharing
 - Teacher then calls on one circle to rotate to the left one student

Day 2: Thinking as Writers

- Mini-lesson
 - Writers don't start by drawing-start by thinking
 - Teacher will model their thinking out loud before drawing a picture
 - focus on thinking before drawing not vice versa
- Writing Time
 - Students will work independently on a new picture
 - Teacher will walk around room questioning students about their choice of topic
- Sharing
 - Stand Up, Hand Up, Pair Up – Kagan Structure
 - Explain to the students that in a moment you will ask for everybody to stand up, hand up, pair up and everybody will have to stand up behind their chair with their writing folder.
 - Then after everybody is standing up each student will put one hand up in the air
 - The students will then walk around until they find a partner who also has their hand up, once they find a partner they give them a high five and stand face to face.
 - The partner with the longest hair shares their writing first, then they switch roles.
 - After both partners are finished sharing the students will thank their partner and return back to their desks.

Day 3: "I'm finished!"

- Mini-lesson (Lucy Calkins-p.13)
 - What to do when you are finished?
 - Create chart (p. 14)
 1. Add to picture
 2. Add to words
 3. Start a new piece
 - Model referring back to chart
 - Teacher will model adding details to the picture from the first day of writing workshop
 - Teacher will model adding words to the picture, either labels and/or phrases
 - Teacher will model thinking that leads to starting new piece
- Writing Time
 - Students will independently work on a writing piece
 - Teacher will monitor and recognize students using strategies from the chart
- Sharing
 - Table Share
 - Each student will share their piece with their peers at their table group.
 - Teacher will give one student an object to discriminate the speaker.
 - Object will be passed to the next student when a student is finished sharing.
 - All students must share and when group is done, object returns to center of table.

Day 4: Writing is an ongoing process

- Mini-lesson (Lucy Calkins-p.18)
 - Today a friend may forget our mini-lesson from yesterday and say, "I'm done! What do I do?"
 - Teacher asks whole group "What would you say to that friend? How could you help them?"
 - Let's act out some ways we can help our friend.
 - Teacher calls on students to role play scenario
 - Scenarios
 - Going back to old writing
 - Adding details (words or pictures) to old pictures
 - Starting new piece
 - Writing names on writing pieces
 - Teacher points out a book and notices that authors write their names on their work
 - Teacher suggests that students follow authors by always putting their names on their paper before they start thinking and writing.
- Writing Time
 - Students independently work on a writing piece

- Teacher walks around and comments on students returning to old pieces and adding on.
- Sharing
 - Students all stand up with writing folder and teacher will pose question
 - “What is your favorite color?”
 - Teacher will call on one student and all students with similar answers will move to a corner of the room.
 - Teacher will continue to call on students until everyone is in a group.
 - Students pair up within group and share writing with partner.

Day 5: Expectations

- Mini-lesson
 - Whole group discussion on what writing workshop should look like and sound like
 - Teacher will write behaviors on Looks like/Sounds like T-chart
 - Practice transitions (carpet to desk and desk to carpet)
 - Use of tools-always use sharpened pencil and eraser, location of tools
 - Voice levels-model and practice correct voice level during writing time
 - How to use writing folder-putting paper in folder correctly and putting folder in desk correctly
 - Sharing time etiquette –respectful comments to peers and active listening skills (whole group role play)
- Writing Time
 - Students will independently work on a writing piece
 - Teacher comments on students behavior during writing (voice level, use of tools, transitions, folder usage)
- Sharing
 - Teacher pairs up students using popsicle sticks with numbers.
 - Students share with partner
 - Teacher comments on respectful sharing

Day 6: “Oh No!” Feeling

- Mid-unit assessment
 - Ask students to draw three pictures of things they could write about.
 - Teacher will assess to see if students are choosing topics that are personally relevant
- Mini-lesson (Lucy Calkins-p.36)
 - Hard to draw ideas
 - Teacher models drawing an action or complex ideas (opening a window)
 - Emphasize labeling will help communicate meaning
- Writing Time
 - Students independently work on a writing piece
 - Teacher comments on students labeling and attempts to draw more complex ideas
- Sharing
 - Author’s Chair
 - Teacher will introduce the special Author’s Chair
 - Every student will share one day during the week
 - Teacher will group students and pick one group a day to share
 - Whole group discussion
 - What does the audience look like and sound like while a peer is sharing?

Day 7: Using both pictures and words-like famous authors

- Mini-lesson (Lucy Calkins-p.44)
 - Show Corduroy by Don Freeman
 - Discuss picture/word placement
 - Show Freight Train by Donald Crews
 - Discuss picture/word placement
 - Read one page from each book.
 - Compare and contrast sentences vs. phrases

- Teacher will explain that both are acceptable because both still communicate meaning
 - Show writing paper and explicitly discuss picture, label, and word placement
- Writing Time
 - Students will independently work on a writing piece
 - Teacher monitors and comments on correct picture, label and word placement
- Sharing
 - Author's Chair-Teacher calls on a new group for sharing
 - Teacher will review audience expectations

Day 8: Stretch, Spell, Reread, Say some more

- Mini-lesson (Lucy Calkins-p.52)
 - *Letters have sounds and letters together make words.*
 - Teacher will model creating a writing piece
 - Emphasize saying a word, stretching the word, writing initial sound, resaying the word, writing next sounds, rereading the whole word (REPEAT process till full thought is written)
 - Continue to model process
- Writing Time
 - Students will independently work on a writing piece
 - Teacher monitors and comments on students saying, stretching, writing, resaying, writing and rereading
- Sharing
 - Author's Chair-Teacher calls on new group for sharing

Day 9: Performance Task

- Mini-lesson
 - *What do good writers do?*
 - Students respond to question
 - Introduce task
 1. Show students rubric and explain
 2. Give blank sheet of writing paper and students will independently choose a topic, draw, label and write.
 3. Teacher will assess student learning an understanding using Beginning Writing rubric.



Day 10: Celebration

- Mini-lesson (I am a writer!)
 - Students will complete Student Survey
 - Students will compare current survey to beginning unit survey
- Sharing Performance task writing piece
 - Teacher will read students' performance task that has been made into a class book
- Writing Workshop Contract
 - Students and teacher will create a writing workshop contract to be signed. It will include:
 1. Refer back to Looks like/Sounds like T-chart
 2. Expectations
 3. Behaviors
 4. Attitude
 5. Affirmation of being a writer
 6. Student signatures to show ownership

Name: _____

Date: _____

Beginning Writing Student Survey

Are you a writer?	YES	NO
How do you feel about writing?		
Do you think writing is hard?	YES	NO
Do you always know what you want to write about?	YES	NO
What do you like to write about? Draw a picture.		
Do you know what writing workshop is?	YES	NO

Name: _____

Date: _____

Beginning Writing Rubric

	Exceeding	Meeting	Approaching
Attitude	Student eagerly gets started on writing task and needs no redirection.	Student willingly gets started on writing task and remains focused with little redirection.	Student avoids writing task and is redirected numerous times.
Topic	Student is able to generate numerous relevant topics and justify their thinking.	Student is able to generate a relevant topic quickly and justify their thinking.	Student is unable to generate any topics or generates irrelevant topics and is unable to justify their thinking.
Writing Quality	Student writes one or more complete sentences.	Student labels pictures and attempts to write relevant words.	Student draws a limited picture with no details, label, or words.
Sharing	Student can reread and discuss writing in detail.	Student is able to reread labels and answer teacher's questions about their writing.	Student unable to describe drawing or writing and is unable to answer teacher's questions about their writing.